

# PROPERTY PLANNING COMMON ELEMENTS

## COMPONENTS OF MASTER PLANS

### RECREATION ACTIVITIES AND THEIR MANAGEMENT

#### Dog Exercising (walking and running) on Trails

##### *Desired Experiences and Site Selection Considerations*

This activity is a form of recreation and exercise for both the dog owner and the pet, and can occur with the dog on or off leash. Most dog-walking occurs for 0.5 to 2 hours at a time. Preferred settings include walking/hiking trails where dogs are allowed as well as fenced “dog parks” where dogs can be off-leash. A high-quality opportunity would include: at least four miles of trails (2-4’-wide, less than 4’ cleared corridor, native surface) in grassland, savanna, or forest habitats with varied terrain (some hills and some flat). Fenced areas that are at least three acres (larger is better) with a mowed grassy area and drinking water are desirable and typically very heavily used. Ponds or lakes are also desirable for pet swimming and retrieving. Over 90% of participation is estimated to take place an hour or less from participants’ homes, so locations near population centers are most desirable.

Participants’ main concern is motorized vehicles, due to danger to the pet. Impacts to other participants, other property users, or neighboring landowners include pet waste, noise from barking, and poorly-behaved or aggressive dogs. Dogs can also present a safety hazard for bikers. Environmental impacts are minor and similar to hiking (soil erosion or compaction, minor trampling of vegetation).

Benefits include exercise/health benefits for both dogs and owners and the opportunity for dog owners to enjoy their pet in a natural setting.

##### *Notable Differences in Participation or Opportunities Across the State*

Demand is generally highest near more heavily populated areas (south-east, south-central, Fox Valley, and Green Bay) and moderate elsewhere in the state.

##### *Notable Times of the Year of High or Low Participation*

Participation is highest in spring, summer and fall, and low in winter.

##### *Participation*

##### Participation Rate and Frequency

Based on a 2016 survey of Wisconsin residents conducted for the development of the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), it is estimated that 32% of adult Wisconsin residents participate in walking or running dogs. This ranked #24 out of 64 activities evaluated.

Days/year	% of Dog Walkers/ Runners
1 to 2	25
3 to 9	33
10 to 29	20
30 or more	22
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>



In terms of frequency, participants that engaged in dog walking and running in trails did so much more frequently than participants in most other activities (it ranked #7 in frequency out of 64 activities evaluated). No doubt this is tied to the need to frequently exercise most dogs.

### Estimated Trends

While no specific measures of dog walking trends are known, one can anticipate as dog ownership changes there will be a commensurate change in dog walking and exercising. Dog ownership is the highest growing pet ownership. Pet populations grew 61% in the last decade, driven by millennials, baby boomers, and the multicultural population (Research and Markets 2017).

### Demographics

As can be seen from the SCORP survey results in the table below, participants in dog walking and running on trails in Wisconsin tend to be represented quite evenly across the three categories assessed (age, gender and residence).

Demographic Category	Demographic Group	% Participation Rate Within Demographic Category	% Composition of Demographic Category (sums to 100%)
Age	18-29	45	29
	30-39	40	23
	40-49	39	17
	50-59	31	18
	60-69	18	10
	70 and older	11	4
	<b>Total</b>	--	<b>100</b>
Gender	Female	34	54
	Male	30	46
	<b>Total</b>	--	<b>100</b>
Residence	Rural	31	47
	Urban	33	53
	<b>Total</b>	--	<b>100</b>

### **References**

Research and Markets. 2017. *Pet Population and Ownership Trends in the U.S.: Dogs, Cats, and Other Pets, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*. Research and Markets, Report ID 4278491, May, 2017.  
[https://www.researchandmarkets.com/research/f9ws72/pet\\_population](https://www.researchandmarkets.com/research/f9ws72/pet_population)

